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CENTER

## Boundary Awareness

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### What Necessitated Boundary Awareness?

- The historical problem of clergy sexual misconduct
- The Church's response: Cover ups!
  - The church has not policed itself
    - See Timothy Litton, "Clergy Sexual Litigation" (The policy role of tort litigation)
- History of Boundary Awareness Training
  - Marie Fortune's contribution
  - A paradigm shift
- The need for expanded Boundary Awareness Training: the world has changed - *Saying No to Say Yes: everyday boundaries and pastoral excellence*

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The bad news about clergy misconduct:  
Why Boundary Awareness training was developed

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### Recent statistics from the Atlantic (June 2019)

- 2009 - The Ryan commission published a 2600 page report detailing horrific sexual abuse of children in Ireland by priests
- In Germany, a leaked bishop's investigation revealed that between 1946-2014, 1670 clergy abused more than 3677 children
- 2018 Pennsylvania grand jury suggested that more than 1000 children were abused by priests
- Texas Rangers raided the offices of the archbishop of Texas
- Reports from Africa...

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### Bad News for Protestants

- "The Sin of Silence: the epidemic of denial about sexual abuse in the evangelical church", May 31, 2018, The Washington post
  - The lack of hierarchy can allow things to go underground
  - The new MeToo Christian bloggers
- The NYTimes coverage of Willowcreek
- The forced retirement of Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Seminary, after reports that he told a rape victim to forgive her assailant rather than call the police

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### The creation of GRACE in 2004

- Boz Tchividjian, grandson of Billy Graham and former Florida assistant state attorney, says "sexual abuse is the most underreported thing - both in and outside the church - that exists."
- Formed Grace: Godly response to abuse in the Christian Environment, to train Christian institutions how to handle sexual abuse, after seeing dozens of cases of sexual abuse in churches

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### More data....

- Wade Mullen, director of the M.Div. program at Capital Seminary and Graduate school, as part of his PhD dissertation did research on the topic.
  - Found between 2016 and 2017 there were 192 instances of a leader from an evangelical church or institution being publicly charged with sex crimes
- The new material coming out of the Southern Baptists
- We could keep going... But you get the point

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The Burn Out factor! (more bad news...)

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### What is burnout?

- Physiological symptoms
- Psychological symptoms
- Relational symptoms
- Spiritual symptoms
- Professional symptoms

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### The bad news about clergy health

- A 7-year study by Duke University found that clergy reported significantly higher rates of diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, asthma and obesity
- A ELCA study found 69% of its ministers overweight, 64% with high blood pressure, 13% on antidepressants
- 2005 study by Presbyterians found quadruple the number of clergy leaving the ministry compared to the 1970s

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### More bad news...

Other studies found that

- 23% have been fired or pressured to resign
- 25% of spouse say their clergy spouse's schedule is a problem for the marriage and family
- 33% reported feeling burned out
- 33% saw ministry as a hazard for their family
- 50% said they would leave if they could find another job
- Since COVID this has all become worse

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We all violate boundaries!

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### Everyday boundary violations

Boundaries are not just about misconduct, or other extremes, they can be simple issues that build up and create burn out and block creativity and excellence in ministry

- Saying yes when you wanted to say no
- Lack of disciplined self care
- Lack of spiritual disciplines
- Lack of hobbies
- Lack of time for creativity

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### Overview of the Day

- The Problem
- The complicated context of ministry
- Definition of Boundaries, Burn out, and self care
- Types of Boundary violations
- Making sense of Boundary problems and Burn out psychologically and systemically
- Prevention
- Differentiation of self and emotional intelligence
- Boundaries as necessary for pastoral excellence

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Let's put the problem in Context: Ministry is different than other professions!

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### Nature of a profession: setting a context

- Professionals have a defined role
- Professionals have a defined level of expertise
- Professionals have clear standards of performance
- Professional identity confers authority
- Professionals are accountable to their professional groups
- The context of boundaries

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### Ministry as a profession?

- Defined roles?
- Expertise?
- Standards of performance?
- Authority?
- Accountability?
- How does all of this impact the ability to set boundaries?
- Ministry as a boundaryless "profession"

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### Boundary Violations

- Are always the fault of the professional
- Who serves who?
- Whose needs are primary?
- Who maintains and defines the boundaries?
- Who regulates distance in the relationship?
- BUT... the context of ministry makes this a challenge

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### Healthy Boundaries are of God!

- In the beginning... was an undifferentiated mass! ("and the earth was without form and void...")
- Boundaries offer identification, protection, and connection
- Boundaries are the context in which intimacy flourishes
- Boundaries allow for creativity and excellence

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### Healthy Boundaries

- Create safety
- Regulate distance
- Define the distance between self and others
- Define the relationship between subsystems
- Prevent burnout and promote self care

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### What are boundaries?

- Professional boundaries
- Personal/family boundaries
- Boundaries around the self
  - The problem of empathy
  - The problem of contagion

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### What do healthy boundaries look like?

- What have we learned about boundaries in families?
  - Boundaries keep children safe
  - Boundaries allow for optimal growth
  - Boundaries done well allow children to launch successfully
- Healthy boundaries in ministry:
  - Protect marriage and family life
  - Protect health
  - Allow for creativity and excellence
- Boundaries around the self

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### Potential Boundary Violations

- Sexual (the most obvious)
  - Sexual misconduct/harassment
  - Pornography
- Electronic
  - Email, texting
  - Social media
- Financial/Gifts
- Conflict of interest
- Family
- Inability to say no; lack of self care resulting in burnout

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### Boundaries demand

- The capacity to say no
- The capacity to hold onto self
- The capacity to maintain connections without losing self
- All of these demand growing differentiation of self

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### Boundaries Create a Context

- Where intimacy can develop
- Where growth can occur
- Where healing can take place
- Where I-Thou connections can arise
- Where Self Care, Creativity, and Excellent can emerge
- Boundaries are essential for Pastoral Excellence and the development of creativity

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### Why are Healthy Boundaries so Hard to Sustain?

Intrapsychic and Systemic contributions

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### Making sense of boundary violations

- What does the research say??
- The intrapsychic lens
- The systemic lens
- The interactional lens

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### The intrapsychic lens

1. Carl Jung
2. Heinz Kohut
3. Family of origin roles
4. Compassion fatigue

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## Intrapsychic Issues

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### Issues within the self

- The contributions of Carl Jung: Persona and Shadow
- The problem of needing validation
- The problem of family roles
- The problem of compassion fatigue and vicarious traumatization

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### The Intrapsychic Lens: Jung

- The contribution of Carl Jung
  - The split between grandiosity and vulnerability: spiritual inflation
  - The split between persona and shadow
  - The God complex
- The God Complex
  - "Each profession carries its respective difficulties, and the danger of analysis is that of becoming infected with the transference projections... when the patient assumes that his analyst is the fulfillment of his dreams, that he is not an ordinary doctor but a sort of savior... he begins to feel if there are saviors, well, perhaps it's just possible that I am one." - Carl Jung

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### The Intrapsychic lens: Heinz Kohut

- Kohut spoke about the need for validation and mirroring
- Kohut spoke about the need for idealization
- Kohut spoke about the need for twinship
- What happens when these are lacking developmentally?
- What happens when the need for validation and mirroring are not met?
- Congregation and congregants as mirrors

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### Case Study: Henry Ward Beecher

- From "The Most Famous Man in America"
- Beecher had conflicts of interest, financial problems, sexual misconduct
- *"Eunice had common sense on her side, as she usually did, but her husband was not tempted by visions of hearth and home. The silence of the writer's study was terrifying compared to the glory of a standing ovation. He was addicted to the adulation his whole life, and he found it. Yet still he was not sated."*
  - From Applegate, L. *The Most Famous Man in America*.

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### The problem of narcissism

- The bolstering of a fragile self
- The excessive need for validation
- A self object reversal

All three can easily lead to boundary violations!

We all can relate to Henry Ward Beecher

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### The Problem of Family Roles

We all have roles we played in family or origin that get played out in leadership

- The Hero/ over responsible child/ excessive other directedness
- The peacemaker
- The scapegoat
- The family counselor
- The clown

These roles are reinforced through validation and become part of a leadership style

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### The problem of compassion fatigue

- Compassion fatigue has also been called
  - Secondary victimization
  - Vicarious traumatization
  - Secondary traumatic stress disorder
- "The culture of overwork is slowly killing us. What will it take for companies to recognize the humanity - simply caring about people - is a huge competitive advantage". (Schwartz, NYTimes, 6.5.15)

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### The problem of compassion fatigue

Charles Figley, author of "*Compassion Fatigue*" states:

"There is a cost to caring. Professionals who listen to client's stories of fear, pain, and suffering may feel similar fear, pain and suffering because they care. Sometimes we feel we are losing our sense of self to the people we serve"

He adds, "sometimes we become emotionally drained by caring....by caring deeply we become emotionally vulnerable...."

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### Compassion Fatigue Defense Mechanisms

1. Displacement: project anger and frustration on those closest to us
2. Repression: bury vs process deep feelings which will then leak
3. Self harm: overwork, overeating, substance abuse
4. Becoming callous, distant, detached

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### Summary: Intrapsychic issues

- Persona vs shadow
- The God complex
- Unmet needs for validation and mirroring
- Old family roles and validation for those roles
- Exhaustion from compassion fatigue
- Old family roles impact leadership in times of anxiety

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## Systemic Contributions to Boundary Problems

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### The self always interacts with the system

The problem of:

- Setting boundaries in a system that resents boundaries
- Congregational expectations and transference
  - The impact of chronic anxiety
- Congregational expectations can create a boundary crisis

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### Understanding Systems theory

- The Secret life of trees
- A major epistemological shift
- From A causes B; to A and B are mutually creating each other
- Systems are driven emotionally not logically
- No one, including leaders, are outside the system
- It is impossible to act in isolation since we are interconnected
- Systems have sub systems

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### Is the system open or closed?

#### Qualities of open systems:

- Flexible
- Adaptive
- Allows new information in
- Flexible boundaries
- Non-Reactive

#### Qualities of closed systems:

- Rigid
- Inflexible
- Black and white thinking (splitting)
- Reactive
- New information not allowed in "But we've always done it that way"

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### The impact of anxiety on the system

#### Acute Anxiety:

- System usually has a healthy baseline
- Acute anxiety is generated by a crisis
- The system is usually able to rebalance
- There is a return to baseline

#### Chronic Anxiety:

- Anxiety is long term and comes from a number of places
- There is no healthy baseline to return to
- It is easy to believe that in the midst of chronic anxiety that the present IS the baseline
- It leads to inflexibility and difficulty changing

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### How do systems "bind" chronic anxiety?

Chronic anxiety intensifies emotional process and is likely to produce either physical or emotional symptoms. Leaders are at risk for health problems. Witness the statistics on clergy health!

#### Binding Anxiety through

- Triangles
- Scapegoats
- Cut-offs/Fusion
- Symptom development

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### The amygdala and emotional contagion

- High road vs low road and the problems of emotional contagion
  - From Daniel Goleman
- Low road circuitry runs beneath our awareness, automatically and at high speed
- Understanding the low road vs the high road at church

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### Differentiation and the amygdala

- The High road works methodically
- Thinking about feelings and watching the “anxiety meter” (Bowen)
- Differentiation: staying on the high road in the midst of high anxiety

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### The current chronic anxiety of the church

Ministry in a post Christian world, means decline and challenges to old ways of being.

The result: chronic anxiety!!

- A focus on numbers, pledges attendance
- Fears about the future: fond memories of the good old days
- Pressure to grow!

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### Summary: the lens of self and systemic interaction

- When the psychological issues of clergy interact with the demands of a chronically anxious system, boundary problems emerge.
- In this definition: boundary problems are co created. As a result not just clergy should attend Boundary Awareness, but all session members and boards should as well.

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## Moving towards Prevention and Creativity

The necessity of differentiation  
of self

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### What is differentiation of self?

- DOS is central to the thought of Murray Bowen (and Steinke, Richardson, Friedman, et al)
- The ability to separate feeling and thinking
  - Undifferentiated people cannot separate feeling and thinking - their intellects are flooded with feelings, blocking rational thinking
- DOS includes self focus, self awareness, realizing the role one plays in problems as opposed to blaming, and staying emotionally connected even when in the midst of conflict and disagreement

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### Differentiation continued

- The ability to be in emotional contact with others yet still autonomous in one's emotional functioning is the essence of the concept of differentiation. (Kerr and Bowen, 1988)
- A "differentiated self" is one who can maintain emotional objectivity, while in the midst of an emotional system in turmoil; yet at the same time, actively relate to key people in the system.
- The real test: Home for the holidays!! How long can you hold onto yourself?

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### What does differentiated leadership look like?

- The ability to separate thinking and feeling
- Undifferentiated people's intellects are flooded with emotion blocking rational thought
- Differentiated Leaders have
  - Self focus
  - Self awareness and self management
  - Take responsibility instead of blaming and remember they are part of the system
  - Stay emotionally connected

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### Differentiation continued

- People with poorly differentiated self depend heavily on the acceptance of others
  - Think about the need for mirroring and affirmation
  - Think about how the need to please leads to boundary problems
  - Many boundary problems occur here
- People with poorly differentiated self can also dogmatically proclaim what others should be like and pressure to conform
  - Implications for authoritarian leadership
  - Failures of EI
- The research on religious tolerance and DOS

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### Differentiation and EI

- Self awareness: the ability to recognize what you are feeling
- Self regulation: the ability to regulate feelings and think before acting
- Motivation: passion for work that transcends money or status
- Empathy: ability to connect to other's feelings
- Social skills: the ability to manage networks of relationships

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### Elements of emotional intelligence

#### The ability to do three things at once

- Recognize and regulate what you are feeling
- Recognize others feelings and practice empathy
- Watch and re-calibrate the interaction between you and the other

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### The most difficult boundary: anxiety!

**It is one thing to focus on boundaries in the areas we have discussed. But having boundaries that keep us from catching contagious anxiety is another issue**

- Recognize chronic anxiety
- Do self regulation in the midst of chronic anxiety
- Move towards process not content
- Understand how one's leadership style changes when anxious
- Understand your interpersonal style when anxious
- Practice staying non reactive and connected when anxious

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### From containing anxiety to creativity

The goal of healthy boundaries is to move from healthy boundaries around anxiety to moving towards growth and creativity

Creativity leads to resurrection

Where is creativity needed right now?

If we are successful in creating boundaries and creative space, what are our hopes and dreams?

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## Prevention and Assessment

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### Self assessment

- Assessment of:
  - Levels of differentiation
  - Leadership style when anxious
  - How much you need to be liked: can you say no?
  - Burnout levels
  - Levels of self care
  - Levels of interpersonal support
  - The level of congregational anxiety and how it is being bound
  - How that impacts clergy leadership

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Building more  
differentiated leadership  
as the key to healthy  
boundaries

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### The role of groups

- Clergy in effective groups tend to have less burnout
- Qualities of effective groups
  - Trust
  - Facilitator
  - Clear goals
  - Honesty/vulnerability
- Types of groups
- An example

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### Strategies: building more differentiated leadership

**Growth in differentiation is not a cognitive exercise! It involves training the limbic system! It means always moving towards anxiety**

- The role of coaching
- The role of systemically based therapy
- The role of working on one's own family
- The role of effective support groups
- The role of spirituality

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Books by David Olsen

*Saying No to say yes: everyday boundaries and pastoral excellence*

*The Couple's Survival Workbook*

*Renewing your Relationship: 5 necessary steps*

*Turning Conflict into Intimacy*

*Integrative Family Therapy*

*When Helping Starts to Hurt*

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